A NEW PARADIGM OF ASSESSMENT ON EDUCATIONAL

INSTITUTION IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Conventional assessment of educational institutionhas been exercised based onthese following aspects: vision, mission, goal and objectives, and the strategies to achieve, organizational aspect, leadership, management system and quality assurance, students and alumni, personnel, curriculum, study process, and academic atmosphere, financing aspect, infrastructure, and information system, research, social responsibility, and collaboration

There are several institutions, nationally and internationally, assessing educational institutions and ranking them. The public is fond of these kinds of ranking system. Parents and prospective students are flocking and fighting to get in to top universities.

This study is conducted in Indonesia within the Indonesian context. Focus groups of academicians and parents are resources regarded as public opinion.

This study is proposing a new paradigm and break-through approach in valuing educational institution. While it is not intended to serve as a critique to the conventional assessment system, it tries to introduce an open-minded approach to valuing education that creates an atmosphere free of competition. The proposed valuation of educational institution is beyond tangible assets. It reaches to the welfare of the nation through creativity, the one thing the conventional assessment fails to measure.

KEYWORDS: Organizational Aspect, Leadership, Management System

INTRODUCTION

Back Ground

Educational institutions are concerned about their own positions in the scrutiny of the public. This so called position is marked by educational accreditation, ranked by independent accreditation bodies, such as AACSB (international), and BAN (BadanAkreditasiNasional in Indonesia). These accreditation bodies are considered very powerful as most educational institutions really try their best to meet the standards set by them. The accreditation status is valued highly and pursued by institutions at all cost. This phenomenon is mostly due to the belief that reputations and achievements of educational institutions depend on their accreditation status. As Sadlak (2006) stated, ranking systems become a standard feature in higher education systems, they are also increasingly accepted as an instrument for undertaking 'quality assurance.' Once they get the best accreditation status, it is easy to attract more students and to gain other academic privileges such as grants and scholarships.

This study attempts to challenge this conventional belief and proposes another approach to value higher educational institution.

Conventional Accreditation System

Accreditation System in any country attempts to assure quality. However, quality is relative to the users and circumstances in which it is applied (Harvey and Green, 1993). The stakeholders constructing the standards for accreditation process incorporate their need in the standards. Therefore, the quality indicated in the accreditation is relative. The credibility of leadership and management of universities is now related to the accreditation status of the universities respectively.

In Indonesia, the only acknowledged accreditation body is the Indonesian National Accreditation Body (Badan Akreditasi Nasional – BAN). There are seven aspects of accreditation standards set by BAN. They are:

- Vision, mission, goal and objectives, and the strategies to achieve

- Organizational aspect, leadership, management system and quality assurance

- Students and alumni

- Personnel

- Curriculum, study process, and academic atmosphere

- Financing aspect, infrastructure, and information system

- Research, social responsibility, and collaboration

Flaws of the Current Conventional Accreditation System

In Daniel Kahneman's (2011) work about non-regressive intuitions, he stated a hypothetical situation about a certain student, Julie, who is currently a student in a state university. Julie read fluently when she was four. The question is; what is her grade Point Average (GPA). Most people would answer it is between 3.7 and 3.8. Kahneman (2011) argues on the causal link between the evidence (Julie's reading) and the target of the prediction (her GPA). Both are indications of academic talent. The associative memory usually quickly construct the best possible prediction. However, would that be true and scientific? Not neccessarily!

Here is a hypothetical university: University X gains the highest accreditation status(A). It owns all the university buildings. What is the average rate of success of the alumni? With associative memory, people tend to predict the average rate of success of the alumni would be between 80-90%. However, when the actual condition is scrutinize, things might not be as they look like. The buildings owned by the university may be given as a charity by some foundation underlying the university. The highest accreditation status may due to some tricks done by the university. Accreditation aims to encourage universities to improve their quality. However, it is an alarming signal when universities tend to stress only on specific areas that are measured by the accreditation board, and neglect other things.

There are some tricky strategies to boost the accreditation status:

- Universities may hire a Nobel prize winner and yet this does not guarantee the higher quality

- Lecturers are pushed to publish crappy materials. Quantity prevails over quality

- Universities hire teaching staffs that are not really teaching. They hire them just to fulfill the teachers-students ratio

- Universities implement international collaborations, even though the collaborations have nothing to do with the improvement of the learning process

- Universities encourage as much as prospective students to apply, even though a great number of them would not be accepted. This is to make the ratio of students accepted look better

Therefore, the non-regressive intuition about the highest accreditation and the success rate of the alumni might not be true. Other circumstances should be considered as well. The accreditation system carries some flaws.

Similar to accreditation, the university ranking process also uses alike standards. Not agreeing with the standards used, some prominent universities such as Tokyo University, Beijing Universityalong with nineteen other mainland Chinese universities, and a group of eleven institutions in Canada withdrew themselves from university ranking processes (Thakur, 2007).

Now, when it comes to part of the stakeholders, the faculty, the accreditation status might not be valued as rewarding to increase salary. The study of Roberts, Jr., Johnson & Groesbeck (2004) shows that while on average it appears that salary increases do not accrue to faculty who must suffer through the accreditation process, 22.2% of the respondents imply that there were salary adjustments. As other examples, while on average it appears that faculty are suffering more stress and find their jobs less rewarding, 22.4% disagree that their jobs are more stressful, and 23.3% agree that their work is more rewarding. Consequently, any school contemplating seeking AACSB accreditation needs to evaluate the results in light of their idiosyncratic circumstances.

In the focus group conducted in this study, the findings are as follows.

While the accreditation system exercised by BAN Indonesia is able to detect unhealthy educational institutions, it also carries some shortcomings.

- The BAN accreditation system fails to value the creativity of the students and personnel. All civitas-academia are driven to achieve uniformed goals with no room for creativity. This conventional accreditation system creates robot-like personnel and students

- There are standards not related to the quality of university such as the number of students admitted from all provinces, ratio of new students and transfer students, percentage of drop-out students, ratio of traceable alumni, ownership of the building, the necessity to provide hard-copies of text- books and journals, the bandwidth of the University wi-fi.

  - Number of students admitted from al provinces is considered as a quality standard as the authority is concerned about the equal opportunity to access higher education for remote provinces in Indonesia. While this is a noble objective, it has nothing to do with the quality of the university

  - The ratio of new students and transfer students does not indicate the quality of the institution. Good universities may have a high demand of transfer students, as the prospective transfer students are aiming to get better education in the particular university

- High percentage of drop-out students also does not signify that the university quality is deficient. It could due to a bad year where majority of students face similar problems

- Small ratio of traceable alumni is not an indicator of poor quality. Alumni may not be well known, but they may also contribute a lot to the nation wealth.

- In this information technology era, it is very ridiculous when the measurement of university quality depends on the number of hard-copy text-books and journal carried by the university library.

- The band-width of the university wi-fi does not correlate with the university quality

- This BAN accreditation system carries unreasonable expectation on the financial aspect. In order to get the highest mark for financial aspect, tuition fees from students should only be accounted as much as 33% of all university revenue. The system requires god universities acquire majority of their funding (67%) from grants, projects, and other non-tuition resources. This is anabsurd indicator of quality.

- In the BAN accreditation system, no pedagogy knowledge assessed. There is no guarantee that lecturers excel in research are able to transfer their knowledge to the students. In fact, several prominent researchers are dumbfounded when it comes to teaching in classrooms.

- The BAN accreditation system exercises arbitrary weightings due to different concepts of university quality.

A New Paradigm

A new paradigm of educational quality should be based in freedom, democracy, trust and responsibility.It should be based on the beliefs that:

- Each institution is unique.

- Uniformed standards are not applicable to all universities. They may be relevant to measure the quality of some universities, but not all.

Freedom in anchoring the university quality should be the new quality standard. Each university is unique and it sets its own vision and missions inimitably. Therefore, the valuing of a university should be perceived by comparing its actual performance and its vision and missions.

Democracy should be the spirit in valuing universities. Higher education institutions should be involved in determining what standards and anchors used to evaluate the learning process accomplished by them. The autocratic system of accreditation would hurt the democratic spirit.

Trust would be the main value of higher education institutions. Universities are considered as prominent, compared to other business-like institutions. Students are educated in universities and they trust the academic institution. It is quite absurd if the government or other accreditation body does not trust the educational institutions.

Responsibility begins with education. Youngsters learn about responsibility from educational processes. Why don't we let educational institutions take an important responsibility to assess their own quality assurance. Anyways, a good university would assess its quality regularly to ensure quality assurance.

Some might argue when there is no uniformed standard in valuing Universities, we might end up with a lot of crappy universities. That is not necessarily true. The public would be the best judge. Eventually crappy universities would vanish as when their true color is revealed, the society would not appreciate them much.

Proposed Practical Measurements of Quality

Vision and Missions of the university would be a perfect standard for measuring quality. The assessment of quality can be performed by scrutinizing the performance of the university compared with its vision and missions.

The impact of the institution on the society is the best way to value whether this university is adding some value to the general public. The most important role of a university is how it educates its students and make them contribute positively to the community, and how it contributes a different color to spice up the market place. This measurement cannot be obtained immediately, as it has to be monitored over time.

The measurement of university quality is beyond quantitative metrics. It is how the university provides the best preparation to equip children according to their unique combination of intelligence.

CONCLUSIONS

Assessment on educational institution should move up to a new paradigm in Indonesia, as the current assessment carries many flaws. Educational quality should be based in freedom, democracy, trust and responsibility, not just by some uniformed standards that are only skin-deep. As Kahneman (2011) says; "The lawn is well trimmed, the receptionist looks competent, and the furniture is attractive, but this does not mean it is a well-managed company. I hope the board does not go by representativeness." Educational quality is beyond what the institutions present as a façade. It goes deeply to penetrate the life of a community.

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